

**WINTER WEATHER PREPAREDNESS WEEK IN NORTH CAROLINA  
DECEMBER 5-11, 2021**

**Excessive cold and winter fire dangers:**

Extremely cold air comes every winter in at least part of the country and affects millions of people across the United States. The arctic air, together with brisk winds, can lead to dangerously cold wind chill values. People exposed to extreme cold are susceptible to frostbite in a matter of minutes. Areas most prone to frostbite are uncovered skin and the extremities, such as hands and feet. Hypothermia is another threat during extreme cold. Hypothermia occurs when the body loses heat faster than it can produce.

**Wind Chill Warning vs Watch**

- **Wind Chill Warning: Take Action!** NWS issues a wind chill warning when dangerously cold wind chill values are expected or occurring. If you are in an area with a wind chill warning, avoid going outside during the coldest parts of the day. If you do go outside, dress in layers, cover exposed skin, and make sure at least one other person knows your whereabouts. Update them when you arrive safely at your destination.
- **Wind Chill Watch: Be Prepared:** NWS issues a wind chill watch when dangerously cold wind chill values are possible. As with a warning, adjust your plans to avoid being outside during the coldest parts of the day. Make sure your car has at least a half a tank of gas, and update your winter survival kit.
- **Wind Chill Advisory: Be Aware:** NWS issues a wind chill advisory when seasonably cold wind chill values but not extremely cold values are expected or occurring. Be sure you and your loved ones dress appropriately and cover exposed skin when venturing outdoors.

**Winter Fire Danger:**

Home fires occur more in winter than in any other season. According to the National Fire Protection Association, half of all home heating fires occur during the winter months. Heating equipment is involved in 1 in every 7 home fires and 1 in every 5 home fire deaths. Here are some safety tips to reduce this risk.

- Keep anything that can burn at least 3 feet from any heat source like fireplaces, wood stoves, radiators, or space heaters.
- To avoid a carbon monoxide poisoning risk, keep portable generators outside away from windows and as far away from your home as possible.
- Install and test carbon monoxide alarms at least once a month.
- Plug only 1 heat-producing appliance, like a space heater, into an electrical outlet at a time.
- Have a qualified professional clean and inspect your chimney and vents every year.
- Store cooled ashes in a tightly covered metal container and keep it outside at least 10 feet from your home and any nearby buildings.

For additional safety tips to reduce the risk of winter fires, please visit <https://www.nfpa.org/winter>.

Additional winter weather preparedness resources:

NWS winter safety page: [https://www.weather.gov/wrn/winter\\_safety](https://www.weather.gov/wrn/winter_safety)

North Carolina Department of Public Safety preparedness page: <http://readync.org>

FEMA's winter preparedness page: <https://www.ready.gov/winter-weather>